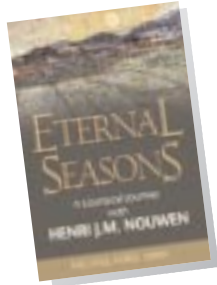




# Readers Group Guide

## ETERNAL SEASONS

### A Liturgical Journey with Henri J.M. Nouwen



Whether a devoted reader of Henri Nouwen or someone discovering him for the first time, ***Eternal Seasons*** provides a comprehensive look at the life-giving writings of Nouwen. Drawing on forty published works, editor Michael Ford presents a unique look at the church year through the compassionate eyes of Henri Nouwen, a Dutch priest who wrote and lectured extensively in North America.

Ford draws on the mystery of the divine celebrated in numerous writings of Nouwen, who embraced the celebration of the seasonal as a way to reveal the eternal. Each season of the church year has its own focus; these seasons celebrated collectively bring us closer to God on our journey and allow us to work through our sorrows and bring us hope. Nouwen embraced the polarities of life and faith through the experience of the Church year. Celebration for Nouwen meant embracing not only the joys but also the sorrows of life and he shows us how the liturgical seasons can give meaning to those celebrations.

Ford divides the ecumenical book into nine liturgical seasons following the church year—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, Transfiguration, Recollection—with pertinent writings by Nouwen carefully selected to illuminate the spirit of these seasons. Also included in each chapter writings for significant feast days of the season. Nouwen viewed the saints as unique individuals to inspire us, not as people to imitate. His hope for us is that we might find a few who speak to us in a special way.

#### WAYS TO USE THIS BOOK

Take time to absorb his insights as you read, to live in *kairos*, God's time. This book is best read throughout the Church year beginning with the appropriate season rather than page one.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP USE

Pick a season in which to have your meeting and read the corresponding chapter. Have each member recount the passage about the saint who spoke to him or her, if indeed any of them did, and why it touched that person. Reflect on Nouwen's view of the season, keeping in mind such questions as: *How does this reading shed a new light on my journey? How does Nouwen call me to grow or change during this part of the Church year? What inspiration and hope do I find in Nouwen's depictions of the feast days?* You might want to incorporate selections from this book in your meetings throughout the year, perhaps pairing it with other devotionals.



#### HENRI J.M. NOUWEN

A wealth of information about this incredible spiritual man can be found on the Internet. Some places for more information include:

- The Henri Nouwen Literary Centre at <http://nouwen.net/> . For those who would like to continue on a daily journey with Henri Nouwen, the Centre's home page offers a daily meditation taken from Nouwen's writings. Links to a biographical sketch, his books, books about Nouwen, personal memories, and upcoming events can be found at this organization founded by the literary executrix of Nouwen's estate.
- Henri Nouwen Society at [www.henrinouwen.org](http://www.henrinouwen.org) . Visitors can subscribe to a daily meditation via email, become a friend of the Society, learn about his life and books, view a schedule of Nouwen related events and more. This extensive website contains a wealth of resources. You can even find an online spiritual director.